CLAIMS

1. A system for use in gathering information for use in managing a network, said network including a plurality of network switches configured in a stack configuration, said system comprising:

a multiplexer for selectively connecting, according to an arbitration scheme, said switches to a single entity for gathering said information from said switches, each of said switches being connected to said multiplexer by a respective connection.

2. A system according to claim 1, wherein said entity comprises a remote monitoring probe.

3. A system according to claim 1, wherein said multiplexer comprises a network hub.

4. A system according to claim 1, wherein said multiplexer comprises a network media access unit.

5. A system according to claim 1, wherein said switches are configured to generate control signals for implementing said arbitration scheme.

6. A system according to claim 5, wherein said multiplexer is configured to be controlled by said control signals.

7. A system according to claim 1, wherein said information comprises switch port activity information, and said switches are configured to permit user selection of particular switch port activity information to be supplied to the entity via the multiplexer.

8. A system according to claim 1, further comprising program processes executed by said switches for carrying out said arbitration scheme.

9. A system for use in gathering information that may be useful to network management, said system comprising:

a plurality of network switches configured in a stacked configuration, each respective switch including a respective port for receiving switch activity-related information from other ports of the respective switch, the switches providing respective switch activity-related information to a single remote monitoring probe, one respective port of one of said switches being connected to another respective port of another of said switches, and said another respective port being connected to said single remote monitoring probe, the respective activity-related information of said one switch being provided to said single remote monitoring probe via a connection dedicated solely to transmission of said respective activity-related information.

10. A system according to claim 9, wherein said switches are configured to implement an arbitration scheme for determining order in which the respective activity-related information of respective switches is provided to said probe.

11. A system according to claim 9, wherein a third respective port of a third switch is connected to said one respective port via another connection, said another connection being solely for transmission of respective activity-related information of said third switch to said one switch.